

University of Groningen

## Positive and negative effects of family involvement on work-related burnout

Brummelhuis, Lieke L. ten; Lippe, Tanja van der; Kluwer, Esther S.; Flap, Henk

*Published in:*  
Journal of Vocational Behavior

*DOI:*  
[10.1016/j.jvb.2008.07.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.07.006)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
2008

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

### *Citation for published version (APA):*

Brummelhuis, L. L. T., Lippe, T. V. D., Kluwer, E. S., & Flap, H. (2008). Positive and negative effects of family involvement on work-related burnout. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73(3), 387.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.07.006>

### **Copyright**

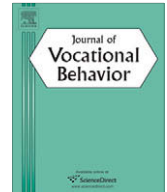
Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

### **Take-down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

*Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.*



## Positive and negative effects of family involvement on work-related burnout

Lieke L. ten Brummelhuis<sup>a,\*</sup>, Tanja van der Lippe<sup>a</sup>, Esther S. Kluwer<sup>b</sup>, Henk Flap<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Sociology, ICS Graduate School, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 2, De Uithof P.O. Box 80.140 3508 TC, Utrecht, The Netherlands

<sup>b</sup> Department of Social & Organizational Psychology, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 24 August 2007

Available online 23 July 2008

#### Keywords:

Burnout

Work–family conflict

Enrichment

Family demands

Gender differences

Gender-role norms

### ABSTRACT

We aimed to explain the influence of family involvement on feelings of burnout among employees who combine work and family tasks. As proxies for family involvement, we used the family structure (partner, number and age of children) and family tasks (e.g. hours spent on household chores). We compared conflict theory and enrichment theory, and investigated how well they explain the relationship between family involvement and feelings of burnout. Based on a sample of 1046 employees at 30 Dutch organizations, the results showed that the presence of young children and doing more household chores were positively related to feelings of burnout, whereas having children reduced employees' feelings of burnout. We also investigated interaction effects of gender and gender-role norms. We conclude that family life can reduce work-related burnout and that for men, the relationship between family involvement and feelings of burnout differs depending on whether they have traditional or modern gender-role norms.

© 2008 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

The number of employees suffering from burnout shows that this occupational disorder is a major problem in today's organizations. About 10% of Dutch employees have burnout complaints (Lautenbach, 2006). Work-related burnout has several drawbacks for employer and employee: reduced well-being, higher absenteeism and turnover rates and poorer performance (Hobfoll & Shirom, 1993). There has consequently been a great deal of research on burnout, defined as a stress syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). This study helps us understand this significant occupational disorder. It is confined to investigating 'emotional exhaustion,' i.e. how frequently employees experience feelings of emotional exhaustion, as this is the key dimension of burnout (Burke & Richardson, 1993).

It is generally assumed that burnout is caused by a heavy workload, the increased mental demands of today's jobs, and other work-related characteristics such as low levels of job autonomy and supervisor support (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). It is possible that burnout can also be traced to the family domain. Employees have had to assume a growing number of family-related duties in the past few decades as more and more women have entered the workforce, the number of single-parent families has increased and men have become more involved in household chores and childcare (SCP, 2006). The combination of work and family demands often leads to time pressure, stress and conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Nonetheless, studies investigating the effects of family responsibilities on work-related burnout are scarce (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Hill, 2005). Previous work–family studies (e.g. Van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders,

\* Corresponding author. Fax: +31 30 253 4405.

E-mail address: [l.tenbrummelhuis@uu.nl](mailto:l.tenbrummelhuis@uu.nl) (L.L. ten Brummelhuis).

2006; Winslow, 2005) focused mainly on work–family conflict, which refers to a form of role conflict in which the family role and the work role are somehow incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). However, work–family conflict does not tell us whether family characteristics also affect work outcomes. In this study, we will investigate the link between family and work-related burnout. It is particularly relevant to examine the relationship between family characteristics and work-related burnout, as it is presumably the time pressure caused by combining work and family that intensifies stress.

This study elaborates on previous studies in four ways. First, the results of empirical studies on the work–family relationship are often contradictory. Some studies found that the presence of children and family tasks increase burnout (Voydanoff, 1988) and absenteeism (Erickson, Nichols, & Ritter, 2000) and lower employee work commitment (Campbell & Campbell, 1994), whereas others point to the beneficial effects of having children and a partner for work outcomes (Lautenbach, 2006; Rothbard, 2001). It is not clear what aspects of family life affect burnout positively or negatively. We are responding to the call in the literature for a more elaborate investigation of the positive relationships between family and work (Boyar & Mosley, 2007; Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006).

Second, measures of family characteristics and family tasks in particular can be improved. Family tasks are often measured by the number of children (Lautenbach, 2006; Rhodes & Steers, 1990) or the perceived quantitative, emotional and mental demands of the home (Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). Although some studies measure the family domain in greater detail by considering the time employees spend on family tasks (Erickson et al., 2000; Voydanoff, 1988), these studies do not investigate the effects of family tasks on stress or feelings of burnout. We will use a more precise measurement of family characteristics, including the family structure (presence of partner, children) and family tasks (the time spent on household chores and childcare), which we label altogether as *family involvement*. In this way, we can determine which specific family factors are related to burnout.

Third, gender differences in work–family studies are often attributed to traditional gender-role norms in which women are expected to take care of the household and men to be the breadwinners. Nowadays, however, the number of dual-earner families is growing and more modern gender-role norms prevail, with both men and women finding it important to participate in family life and work (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). In addition to gender differences, it would therefore be valuable to investigate whether the importance employees attach to family and work roles gives rise to differences in the work–family relationship.

Fourth, some authors have argued that work outcomes are predicted mainly by work characteristics, such as workload and work motivation. Family characteristics are assumed to affect work outcomes only in combination with those work characteristics (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992). For example, strict family demands may aggravate the harmful effect of a heavy workload on burnout. In order to understand the importance of the role of family life in work-related burnout, we investigate whether family involvement is related to feelings of burnout independently of work characteristics, such as workload.

Summarizing, the main question addressed by this study is to what extent family involvement is positively or negatively related to feelings of burnout. As a contribution to previous work–family studies, we test whether family involvement can be beneficial for work and investigate this relationship by performing detailed measurements of family involvement. We also examine whether differences in the relationship between family involvement and burnout can be attributed to gender or to differences in the importance employees attach to the work role and the family role. Finally, we verify whether the effect of family involvement on feelings of burnout is independent of work characteristics.

### 1.1. Enrichment or depletion?

*Conflict theory* is the dominant paradigm in work–family research (Eby et al., 2005; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hill, 2005; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). The main assumption in conflict theory is that time and energy are limited resources. The relationship between family and work is best reflected by a zero-sum game. Time and energy spent on the family cannot be invested in work and vice versa. According to this theory, employees who are involved in family life will have less time and energy for their work and risk getting burned out by overburdening themselves.

In reaction to conflict theory, a growing number of authors have argued that the conceptualization of work and family as time and energy-consuming entities is too simplistic (Crouter, 1984; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marks, 1977; Wayne, Randel, & Stevens, 2006). Although it has been several decades since Marks (1977) and Crouter (1984) pointed to a possible mutually beneficial relationship between work and family, the mechanisms of this beneficial linkage have only recently been described by the *enrichment approach* (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hill, 2005). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) describe three mechanisms that make family directly beneficial for work. First, family life can be rewarding; it is a source of fulfillment, respect and energy that can be invested in work. Second, family life can help employees develop several skills and gain experience and knowledge that they can then use at work. Third, participating in both family life and work extends an employee's network, or social capital. Social capital, such as the partner's professional contacts, can be used to further the employee's career.

Previous studies have pointed out that work–family enrichment is distinct from work–family conflict and that enrichment and conflict can occur at the same time, separate from each other (Boyar & Mosley, 2007; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijaart, 2007). Note that there might be a ceiling to enrichment, as family involvement somehow requires an investment of time and energy despite the resources gained. In this study, we explore possible limitations of either theory by test-

ing predictions derived from conflict theory and the enrichment approach. We start by examining whether the relationships between several family characteristics and burnout are positive or negative.

### 1.2. *The family in detail*

Work–family studies advocating the conflict approach often treat having a family as a proxy for the family workload, whereby having more children and having younger children are associated with higher levels of conflict (Crouter, 1984; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Voydanoff, 1988). Following the conflict perspective, we predict that having more children and having younger children are positively related to feelings of work-related burnout (H1).

In a refinement of the demographic proxies for family workload, family demands can be measured by the quantitative, emotional and mental home demands. Peeters et al. (2005) measured the quantitative home demands on a 3-item scale asking respondents whether they have to hurry at home, have a lot of tasks at home, and whether they have to do many things in a hurry at home. The results supported the conflict approach: having more family demands is related to more feelings of burnout. Some other studies measured the ‘actual’ time spent on family tasks (Erickson et al., 2000; Voydanoff, 1988) and showed that having to perform more household chores is related to higher absenteeism levels at work and more work–family conflict. We expect a similar effect on feelings of burnout: household chores are positively related to feelings of work-related burnout (H2).

Other studies emphasized the enriching effects of family on work outcomes. One type of enrichment is the energy and fulfillment gained from the presence of a partner and children. Lautenbach (2006) showed that burnout levels were lower among women who had a partner and children than among single, childless women. We hypothesize that having a partner and children gives employees energy and resources, reducing feelings of burnout (H3).

In addition, many studies have looked at the beneficial effects of the partner’s resources. A partner may relieve some of the family workload, thereby diminishing the work–family conflict (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Hill, 2005; Voydanoff, 1988). Following Voydanoff (1988), we assume that men working fewer hours are better able to participate in family tasks. A partner can also offer career advice, income and status that enhance the employee’s career success (Bernasco, De Graaf, & Ultee, 1998). The partner’s resources may therefore enhance the employee’s well-being and lower his or her work–family conflict (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). We hypothesize that a similar mechanism holds for feelings of burnout: having a partner with greater socio-economic resources will be negatively related to feelings of work-related burnout (H4).

In addition to help from the partner, employees may receive help with family tasks from others, such as family members, friends or a paid third party. Outsourcing family tasks can save the employee time and energy and we therefore expect that outsourcing household chores and childcare will be negatively related to feelings of burnout (H5).

Finally, we argue that the effect on feelings of burnout may vary depending on the type of family task. Voydanoff (1988) makes a distinction between time spent on chores and time spent on childcare. Her results show that these tasks have opposing relationships to work–family conflict; childcare lowered conflict, while chore tasks increased conflict. Moreover, previous research has indicated that childcare is perceived as more pleasant than chores such as cleaning and doing laundry (Poortman & Van der Lippe, 2007). Based on these insights, we expect that performing childcare tasks will be negatively related to feelings of burnout, whereas performing chores will be positively related to feelings of burnout (H6).

### 1.3. *Gender differences*

Most work–family research takes possible gender differences into account (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The *sex-role theory* is commonly used to explain gender differences in the relationship between family and work (Voydanoff, 2002). This theory predicts that family will have stronger negative effects on work outcomes among women than among men, as women regard family roles, such as being a parent, as more important (Voydanoff, 2002). Men are supposedly better able to separate family influences from the work domain because they feel primarily responsible for the work role. So far, empirical findings have not provided convincing confirmation for the sex-role theory (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). Some studies found that family characteristics have a stronger negative effect on women’s work outcomes than on men’s (Dilworth, 2004; Keene & Reynolds, 2005), while other studies did not show notable gender differences (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). These mixed results have led researchers to focus on within-gender variation in addition to between-gender differences in the work–family linkage. Social and cultural factors, such as the salience of a role to an individual or what significant others expect from the individual’s participation in a role, may also moderate the relationship between family and work, as well as the individual’s abilities and personality traits (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Moreover, modern norms concerning the gender-role division are becoming increasingly common, stressing an egalitarian role division in which both sexes value to participate in paid labor and domestic work (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). The prevalence of modern norms contradicts the assumption that men and women divide their roles according to traditional gender-role norms. We will therefore specify whether gender in itself moderates the relationship between family involvement and burnout, or whether the importance of the work role and family role to the employee is responsible for any differences.

We begin by investigating a moderator effect of gender on the family-to-work relationship, following the sex-role hypothesis. We expect that the relationship between family involvement and feelings of burnout is stronger for women than for men (H7), assuming that women feel primarily responsible for the family role. Second, we test whether the relationship between family involvement and burnout is moderated by the importance of a role, approximated by the employee’s gender-

role norms. We expect that family involvement will increase work-related burnout if the family role is less important to the employee. Men with traditional norms have a lower preference for participation in family life than men with modern norms. We therefore expect a stronger positive relationship between family involvement and burnout among men who have traditional norms than among men who have modern norms (H8a). The family is the most preferred domain of involvement for women with traditional norms, whereas women with modern norms try to diminish family involvement in order to invest in a professional career (Diefenbach, 2003). We thus expect a stronger positive relationship between family involvement and burnout among women who have modern norms than among women who have traditional norms (H8b).

#### 1.4. Family as buffer or catalyst

Several authors have suggested that family characteristics affect work outcomes only in combination with work characteristics, such as workload (Barnett et al., 1992; Rhodes & Steers, 1990; Voydanoff, 1988). Workload has fewer harmful effects on well-being when employees have a satisfying family life (Barnett et al., 1992; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Rothbard, 2001), but a heavy workload leads to stress when employees also have heavy family demands. Voydanoff (1988) found that the harmful effect of work conflicts and weekend work on work–family conflict is stronger among employees with more family responsibilities than among employees with fewer such responsibilities. We investigate whether the relationship between family involvement and burnout is indeed dependent of workload. In line with previous hypotheses derived from conflict and enrichment theory, we will test opposing hypotheses. A high level of family involvement will strengthen the positive relationship between workload and feelings of burnout (H9a), or a high level of family involvement will buffer the positive relationship between workload and feelings of burnout (H9b).

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Respondents and procedure

The data are taken from the *Time Competition Survey* held in 2003 among employees at 30 Dutch firms. The purpose of the survey was to study the causes of and solutions to work-home interference (Van der Lippe & Glebbeek, 2004). The number of industries covered was representative for the Dutch economy, although the service sector was somewhat overrepresented. Large organizations were also over-sampled. Home interviews were conducted with 1114 employees and, where relevant, with their partners, resulting in a response rate of 28%. This response rate is reasonable for The Netherlands (Kalmijn, Bernasco, & Weesie, 1999), although somewhat low compared to international standards.

Employees were first called at work and asked to participate in the survey. If they were willing to do so, they were asked to give their home address. Of the 3970 employees contacted, 39% agreed to participate. Each employee was subsequently contacted at home to make an appointment for the home interview. Of the employees contacted at home, 28% were not interviewed in the end, usually because the partner had refused to cooperate. Analyses showed that households not willing to cooperate did not differ from those willing to join the research in terms of background characteristics (e.g. gender, education, work hours).

We left out respondents who had failed to complete at least 75% of the survey, respondents who worked fewer than 12 h a week, and employees with a partial occupational disability. Although we included employees on sick leave, respondents suffering feelings of emotional exhaustion may be underrepresented in this sample, as we approached employees via the work domain. Employees suffering long-term burnout were therefore more likely to be excluded. We have information on the family and work characteristics of 1046 employees, including employees with ( $n = 785$ ) and without a partner ( $n = 261$ ).

### 2.2. Instruments

Employees were interviewed at home in oral and written form. Both the interview and the written questionnaire consisted of closed questions about the respondents' family situation and work characteristics. The written questionnaire also contained questions on personal beliefs. The interviews at home lasted an average of 90 min for couples and one hour for singles. In addition, respondents filled in a 'time diary' during the week before the interview reporting how many hours they spent on cooking, cleaning, childcare, sleeping, leisure time in groups, commuting and working. Respondents were instructed to report every evening how much time they had spent on each activity in hours or half hours. If respondents lived with a partner, the partner was also interviewed and filled in a time diary (Van der Lippe & Glebbeek, 2004). Most of the variables were taken from the oral interview, with the exception of work motivation, supervisor support and gender-role norms, covered in the written questionnaire.

### 2.3. Measures

#### 2.3.1. Burnout

We operationalized feelings of work-related burnout as emotional exhaustion, as this is considered the main, dominant and most significant dimension of burnout (Burke & Richardson, 1993). *Emotional exhaustion* was assessed using the Dutch



version (Schaufeli & Van Dierendonck, 1993) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory—general survey (MBLGS; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). The MBI is the most frequently used self-reporting measure of work-related burnout and has often been shown to be a valid and reliable measurement instrument for burnout (e.g. Malach-Pines, 2005). Emotional exhaustion was measured by three items: 'I feel used up at the end of the working day,' 'I feel mentally exhausted because of my job' and 'I feel tired when I get up on a working day' (answer categories ranged from 1 = *never* to 7 = *daily*). Principal component analysis extracted a single component with a total eigenvalue of 2.369 and the reliability of the scale was high (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ). The emotional exhaustion scale was normally distributed with a skewness of .317 (*SE* .076) and kurtosis of  $-.759$  (*SE* .151).

### 2.3.2. Family involvement

We measured *family structure* by three indicators: presence of a partner, number of children and age of children. For presence of a partner, we used a dummy variable labeled 0 (*single*) and 1 (*partner*). Number of children is a continuous variable running from 0 to 6 children. We entered a dummy for presence of young children in the household (0–6 years old).

The *amount of time spent on family tasks* was measured in hours spent every week on household chores and childcare tasks. Respondents reported how many hours they spent buying groceries, cooking, tidying up, cleaning, keeping household accounts, doing repairs (*household chores*), taking care of children and accompanying children (*childcare*).

For the *partner's resources*, we included income, education and work hours. *Partner's income* was measured as the partners' net monthly wages. *Partner's education* was measured on a 12-point scale ranging from 0 (*not finished school*) to 11 (*university degree*). *Partner's work hours* were measured as the actual work hours per week including overtime.

*Outsourcing of household chores and outsourcing of childcare* were entered as two dummy variables, labeled 0 (no outsourcing) and 1 (outsourcing of household/care tasks).

*Gender-role norms* were measured on a Likert scale consisting of five items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .70$ ; answer categories 1 = *totally agree* to 5 = *totally disagree*) with the items 'A woman is more suitable to raise little children than a man,' 'I think it is most natural when the man is breadwinner and the woman takes care of the household and children,' 'In my opinion a woman can be fully satisfied with her life if she is a good mother,' 'I find it normal when women have a management position' (reversed), and 'I think it is normal when a woman is in technical school' (reversed).

*Gender* was entered as a dummy variable, labeled 0 (*man*) and 1 (*woman*).

### 2.3.3. Work characteristics

Several *work characteristics* were included in the analyses. We controlled for the *workload*, measured as the absolute number of work hours per week. *Work pressure* was measured on a Likert scale using the three items 'I always have a lot of work to do,' 'I must work very fast' and 'I work under time pressure' (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ; answer categories from 0 = *never* to 5 = *daily*). *Job position* was entered by a dummy, labeled 0 (*staff position*) and 1 (*management position*). *Supervisor support* was measured on a scale consisting of five items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .86$ ; answer categories from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*). Sample items of supervisor support are 'I feel appreciated by my supervisor' and 'my supervisor shows understanding if I have problems.' *Job motivation* was measured with a Likert scale consisting of 14 items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .78$ ; answer categories from 1 = *always* to 7 = *never*), such as 'I do my job because I like it and not because I get paid' and 'I feel happy when I work.' Finally, *job autonomy* was measured on a Likert scale consisting of three items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .69$ ; answer categories from 1 = *totally disagree* to 5 = *totally agree*), such as 'I can plan my work myself' and 'I'm involved in decision-making about my job.'

### 2.3.4. Background characteristics

The employee background characteristics age and education were included. *Age* was measured as a continuous variable and *education* was measured on a 12-point scale ranging from 0 (*not finished school*) to 11 (*university degree*).

## 2.4. Data analysis

We tested the hypotheses by using OLS models with cluster correction, taking into account the nested character of our data. The cluster correction controls for the fact that employees of one organization may be more similar to one another than employees of different organizations. To test the interaction effects of workload and gender on the relationship between family characteristics and emotional exhaustion, we calculated the centered cross products of all ten family characteristics with workload and gender, respectively. The cross products were entered in the regression analyses, including the original variables of family characteristics, workload and gender. This method resulted in twenty interaction analyses. Only the statistically significant interaction effects were reported in the tables.

Next, we estimated the regressions of the family variables on burnout for female and male employees separately. In these separated models, we included the interaction terms of gender-role norms and family characteristics. This enabled us to test whether there was a difference between traditional men and modern men and between traditional women and modern women in the relationship between family involvement and emotional exhaustion.

The characteristics of the partner (education, income, work hours) and two work characteristics (job position and supervisor support) had no effect on the employee's emotional exhaustion. We analyzed the models with and without these vari-

ables. Because they had no effect in any analysis, we reported the models without the partner variables and the two work variables, creating more parsimonious models (Hox, 2002).

### 2.5. Descriptive statistics

The descriptive analysis (Table 1) of the total sample showed that the research population included more male than female employees (565 men versus 481 women) and that respondents were relatively highly educated. In the sample, 74% of the respondents had a partner and 53% respondents had children. The mean length of the work week was 37.6 h (men 41.4 h, women 33.2 h). National figures for the Netherlands report a mean work week duration of 24.9 for women and 37.2 for men (SCP, 2006). We only included employees who worked at least 12 h, explaining the relatively long work week we found in our sample. The mean scores on the emotional exhaustion scale were in the middle of the scale. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for men and women separately as well. Unpaired *T*-tests showed that male employees were higher educated, worked longer weeks, were more likely to occupy a management position, and had jobs with more autonomy and supervisor support than female employees. Women spent more hours on household chores and childcare and had more modern gender-role norms than men.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Family involvement

Table 2 shows the regression models of work and family factors on emotional exhaustion. Consistent with past research, work pressure and work hours were positively related to emotional exhaustion, whereas job motivation and autonomy significantly reduced emotional exhaustion. The analysis of the family model showed that family characteristics significantly added to the work model in explaining emotional exhaustion, although the effect was small ( $\Delta R^2 = .012, p < .01$ ). The number of children was negatively related to emotional exhaustion, while the presence of children younger than 6 years was positively related to emotional exhaustion. Having a partner was not significantly related to emotional exhaustion. The time spent on household chores was positively related to emotional exhaustion, while the time spent on childcare did not affect emotional exhaustion. These results partly support hypothesis 1, more specifically that the presence of young children is positively related to emotional exhaustion. Further, hypothesis 2, which predicts that doing more household chores is positively related to burnout, was supported by our results. Hypothesis 3 was partly supported. In particular, we found that having children but not having a partner reduced emotional exhaustion.

We did not find that partner resources (work hours, income and education) affected the employee's emotional exhaustion, nor did outsourcing household chores and childcare tasks. This means that hypotheses 4 and 5, which predict a negative relationship between burnout and the partner's resources and between burnout and outsourcing of family tasks, respectively, were not supported. Although we found a positive relationship between the time spent on household chores and emo-

**Table 1**  
Means and standard deviations of the variables used for total sample, men and women

Variables	Total sample		Men		Women	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Emotional exhaustion	3.00	1.39	2.98	1.37	3.02	1.41
Education	8.04	2.19	8.20	2.27	7.84	2.08
Age	39.91	8.99	40.38	8.74	39.34	9.27
Work hours	37.63	8.68	41.38	6.70	33.15	8.66
Work pressure	2.57	1.06	2.55	1.02	2.60	1.10
Manager	.41	.49	.49	.50	.31	.46
Job motivation	3.52	1.25	3.55	1.22	3.48	1.28
Work autonomy	3.94	.77	4.03	.74	3.83	.79
Supervisor support	2.32	.70	2.38	.72	2.24	.68
Partner	.74	.44	.79	.41	.68	.47
Number of children	1.02	1.13	1.13	1.18	.90	1.07
Household chores	18.72	9.82	15.33	7.95	22.77	10.30
Childcare	7.98	10.26	7.03	9.08	9.12	11.41
Children <6 years	.21	.41	.22	.42	.19	.40
Work hours partner	31.93	11.53	27.28	11.30	37.74	8.87
Education partner	7.52	2.07	7.56	1.98	7.46	2.17
Income partner	2450.72	7829.51	1860.94	6982.99	3154.25	8687.87
Help household chores	.39	.49	.39	.49	.39	.49
Help childcare	.30	.46	.31	.46	.28	.45
Gender-role norms	3.89	.65	3.74	.65	4.06	.61

Source: Time competition survey (Van der Lippe and Glebbeek, 2004).

Total *n* = 1046, men *n* = 565, women *n* = 481.

**Table 2**

OLS regressions of work and family characteristics and interaction of gender on emotional exhaustion

Predictors	Controls	Work factors	Family factors	Interaction gender
Female	.04	.19	.21	.43*
Education	.07**	.04	.05	.06
Age	-.02**	-.01*	-.01	-.01*
Work hours		.02**	.03***	.02***
Work pressure		.13***	.13***	.13***
Work motivation		-.03***	-.03***	-.02***
Work autonomy		-.04**	-.04**	-.04**
Partner			-.03	.06
Number of children			-.09*	-.10**
Children < 6 years			.21*	.21*
Household chores			.01*	.01**
Childcare			-.00	-.00
Modern gender-role norms			-.04*	-.04*
Female × partner				-.38*
R <sup>2</sup> change	.03***	.16***	.01**	.003*
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.03	.19	.22	.22
Total F Statistic	13.64***	63.27***	4.29**	5.21*

Note: Entries represent standardized regression coefficients.  $n = 1046$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .

tional exhaustion, no significant relationship was found between the time spent on childcare and emotional exhaustion. We therefore cannot confirm hypothesis 6, that childcare lowers emotional exhaustion. Finally, the analysis of the family model showed that norms concerning gender-role division had a striking effect. Employees with more traditional norms experienced more emotional exhaustion than employees with more egalitarian gender-role norms. In summary, the results indicate that the presence of children reduces emotional exhaustion, confirming the enrichment approach. Hours spent on household chores and the presence of young children were positively related to emotional exhaustion, supporting the conflict approach.

### 3.2. Gender differences

Only gender and having a partner had a significant interaction effect on emotional exhaustion ( $\Delta R^2 = .003$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The model in Table 2 shows that women experienced significantly less emotional exhaustion when they had a partner, while this relationship was not found for men. This result provides weak support for our expectation that the relationship between family involvement and emotional exhaustion is stronger for women than for men (H7).

We further investigated the differences between men and women by estimating the models for men and women separately (Table 3). These results confirmed our assumption that having a partner reduces emotional exhaustion for women but not for men. The family model had additional predictive value for emotional exhaustion on top of the work model for men

**Table 3**

OLS regressions of work and family characteristics and interaction with gender-role norms on emotional exhaustion for men and women

Predictors	Men			Women	
	Work factors	Family factors	Interaction norms	Work factors	Family factors
Education	.06	.08	.08**	.01	.03
Age	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01**	-.02**
Work hours	.02**	.02*	.02*	.03***	.03**
Work pressure	.12***	.13***	.13***	.15***	.14***
Work motivation	-.03**	-.02**	-.02**	-.02**	-.02**
Work autonomy	-.06**	-.05**	-.05*	-.03	-.03
Partner		.04	.01		-.31**
Number of children		-.06	-.06*		-.17**
Children < 6 years		.22	.26		.20
Household chores		.01	.01		.02**
Childcare		-.00	.11**		.00
Modern gender-role norms		-.06**	-.02*		-.02
Modern gender-role norms * childcare			-.01**		
R <sup>2</sup> change	.17***	.02**	.01**	.19***	.03***
Total R <sup>2</sup>	.17	.19	.20	.23	.26
F Statistic	78.96***	3.37**	12.08**	23.66***	7.54**

Note: Entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Men  $n = 565$ , women  $n = 481$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .



( $\Delta R^2 = .022$ ,  $p < .01$ ), due mainly to gender-role norms: men with traditional norms experienced more emotional exhaustion than men with more modern gender-role norms. None of the family variables were significantly related to emotional exhaustion among men, but family characteristics did explain additional variance in emotional exhaustion among women ( $\Delta R^2 = .034$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The presence of a partner and children reduced emotional exhaustion among women, while more hours spent on household chores increased their emotional exhaustion. We assessed whether the relationships found among women are due to their relatively more modern gender-role norms compared to men. We tested whether gender-role norms moderated the relationship between family variables (partner, household chores) and burnout in the total sample. The interaction effects were not significant, indicating that the effects we found among women are not caused by differences in gender-role norms between men and women.

Hypotheses 8a and b were tested by estimating the interaction effects of gender-role norms on the relationship between family involvement and emotional exhaustion among men and women. Table 3 shows that the interaction of gender-role norms and childcare tasks on emotional exhaustion was significant for men. Men with traditional norms experienced more emotional exhaustion if they were involved in childcare than men with modern norms. This result is in accordance with hypothesis 8a, which predicts that family involvement will have a stronger harmful effect on burnout among men who have traditional gender-role norms than among men with modern gender-role norms.

No moderator effects of gender-role norms were found among women. This indicates that the relationship between family involvement and emotional exhaustion is the same for women, regardless of their gender-role norms. Hypothesis 8b was therefore not supported.

### 3.3. Interaction effects of workload

As none of the interaction terms of workload and the family characteristics was significantly related to burnout, hypotheses 9a and b were not corroborated. Our results thus showed that family characteristics are related directly to emotional exhaustion, independent of work characteristics.

## 4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate whether the effect of family involvement on feelings of burnout is best explained by conflict theory or the enrichment approach. We conclude that propositions derived from both the enrichment and conflict approaches are valid, but for different family characteristics. Household chores and the presence of young children increased feelings of burnout, whereas the presence of children and, for women, the presence of a partner decreased feelings of burnout. Our results indicate that the linkage between family and feelings of burnout may best be viewed as the outcome of two opposing processes that occur simultaneously (Van Steenbergen et al., 2007). The enrichment approach teaches us that family involvement provides energy, resources and self-esteem, whereas the conflict approach states that family involvement also costs time and energy. Every aspect of family involvement, whether it be having children or doing chores, has both positive and negative aspects. Apparently, having children gives employees more resources and energy, outweighing the time and energy they expend caring for children and therefore reducing feelings of burnout. However, we also found that there is a limit to the enriching effect of family on work, since burnout was higher among employees with young children and who performed more household chores. Our study shows that it is important to distinguish between different family characteristics when examining the relationship between family and work outcomes because some factors increase and others reduce burnout.

In addition, we examined gender differences in the relationship between family involvement and burnout. The presence of a partner functioned as a buffer for feelings of burnout among women, while this effect was absent for men. Since the relationship between other family variables and burnout did not differ between men and women, we found only moderate support for the proposition derived from sex-role theory that the family–work boundary is more permeable for women than for men. To elaborate on the examination of gender differences, we also took into account men's and women's views on the gender-role division. Among men, gender-role norms indeed influenced whether the relationship between family and feelings of burnout was enriching or conflicting. Among men with traditional gender-role norms, the hours spent on childcare were positively related to feelings of burnout, whereas this was not the case for men with modern gender-role norms. These results suggest that, for men, family involvement is harmful for work outcomes when the family role is less important to them.

Finally, we checked whether family characteristics were related directly to burnout or only in combination with work characteristics. No combined effects of workload and family characteristics on burnout were found, whereas the direct relationship between family characteristics and burnout persisted. Based on our results, we conclude that family characteristics have a direct effect on feelings of work-related burnout, independent of work characteristics.

### 4.1. Limitations, future directions and implications

This study was subject to a number of limitations. First, the study was cross-sectional, meaning that no firm conclusions regarding causal relationships can be made. Second, the measurement of work-related burnout was restricted to the exhaus-

tion dimension. Although exhaustion is the main feature of burnout, a more refined measurement would be obtained by including the other dimensions 'depersonalization' and 'diminished personal accomplishment.' Our study design also does not exclude the possibility that personality traits and values other than gender-role norms are responsible for variance in both the predictors and the dependent variable, and that these factors may also differ between male and female employees. Despite these limitations, the strengths of our study were the relatively large number of respondents and the use of time diaries, resulting in a reliable measure of actual time spent on family (Brandon & Temple, 2006).

Future research is needed to investigate whether personality traits and personal values have an impact on the work–family linkage. In addition, it would be interesting to examine the partner's support in more detail, for example by including information on the family tasks performed by the partner. Future studies could also elaborate on the measure of the burden that employees face at home as well as being overextended by addressing the perceived stress involved in performing family tasks and in leaving such tasks unfinished. Finally, it would be useful to investigate whether family involvement has a similar effect on other work outcomes such as absenteeism and work performance, and on family outcomes such as family life satisfaction and marital quality.

This study provides several practical implications that could aid employers and employees seeking work–family balance. The key to minimizing feelings of burnout can be found in reducing the employees' household chores. Organizations could help their employees find reliable household help or provide other types of chore outsourcing. Moreover, organizations should be aware of how important work and family roles are to employees when providing family-friendly facilities. Men with traditional gender-role norms will probably benefit more from an onsite nursery, instead of being allowed to work at home. Furthermore, families considering outsourcing childcare could bear in mind that spending time with children can be beneficial for work outcomes.

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that, in addition to gender, the importance of the family role and work role to employees explains differences in the family-to-work relationship. Furthermore, our study indicated that while having young children and performing household chores may increase burnout, having children can be beneficial. All in all, we have shed more light on the family-to-work linkage and identified both the conflicting and enriching effects of family involvement on burnout.

## References

- Barnett, R. C., Marshall, N. L., & Pleck, J. H. (1992). Men's multiple roles and their relationship to men's psychological distress. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54, 358–367.
- Bernasco, W., De Graaf, P. M., & Ultee, W. C. (1998). Coupled careers: The effect of spouse's resources on occupational attainment in the Netherlands. *European Sociological Review*, 14, 15–31.
- Boyar, S. L., & Mosley, D. C. (2007). The relationship between core self-evaluations and work and family satisfaction: The mediating role of work–family conflict and facilitation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71, 265–281.
- Brandon, P. D., & Temple, J. B. (2006). Determinants of time allocation combinations among non-employed older persons: Evidence from Australian Time Use Diaries. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 41, 7–20.
- Burke, R. J., & Richardsen, A. M. (1993). Psychological burnout in organizations. In R. T. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational behavior* (pp. 263–299). New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Campbell, D. J., & Campbell, K. M. (1994). The effects of family responsibilities on the work commitment and job performance of non-professional women. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 67, 283–314.
- Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., Wayne, J. H., & Grzywacz, J. G. (2006). Measuring the positive side of the work–family interface: Development and validation of a work–family enrichment scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68, 131–164.
- Cinamon, R. G., & Rich, Y. (2002). Gender differences in the importance of work and family roles: Implications for work–family conflict. *Sex Roles*, 47, 531–541.
- Cordes, C., & Dougherty, T. (1993). A review and an integration of research on burnout. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 18, 621–656.
- Crouter, A. C. (1984). Spillover from family to work: The neglected side of the work family interface. *Human Relations*, 37, 425–442.
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 499–512.
- Diefenbach, H. (2003). Gender ideologies, relative resources and the division of housework in intimate relationships: A test of Human Rodman's theory of resources in cultural context. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 43, 45–64.
- Dilworth, J. (2004). Predictors of negative spillover from family to work. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25, 241–261.
- Eby, L. T., Casper, W. J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C., & Brinley, A. (2005). Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the literature (1980–2002). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66, 124–197.
- Edwards, J., & Rothbard, N. (2000). Mechanisms linking work and family: Clarifying the relation between work and family constructs. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 178–199.
- Erickson, R. J., Nichols, L., & Ritter, C. (2000). Family influences on absenteeism: Testing an expanded process model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 57, 246–272.
- Friedman, S. D., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2000). *Work and family-allies or enemies? What happens when business professionals confront life choices*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Frone, M. R., Russell, M., & Cooper, M. L. (1992). Antecedents and outcomes of work–family conflict: Testing a model of the work–family interface. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 65–78.
- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *The Academy of Management Review*, 10, 76–88.
- Greenhaus, J., & Powell, G. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work–family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 72–92.
- Grzywacz, J. G., & Marks, N. F. (2000). Reconceptualizing the work family interface: An ecological perspective on the correlates of positive and negative spillover between work and family. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 5, 111–126.
- Hill, E. J. (2005). Work family facilitation and conflict, working fathers and mothers, work family stressors and support. *Journal of Family Issues*, 26, 793–819.
- Hobfoll, S., & Shirom, A. (1993). New York: Marcel Dekker.
- Hox, J. J. (2002). *Multilevel Analysis*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kalmijn, M., Bernasco, W., & Weesie, J. (1999). Huwelijks-en samenwoonrelaties in Nederland: De Organisatie van Afhankelijkheid. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Keene, J. R., & Reynolds, J. R. (2005). The job costs of family demands. *Journal of Family Issues*, 26, 275–299.
- Lautenbach, H. (2006). Multiple work burden and burnout among women. *Sociaal Economische Trends*, 2, 11–14.

- Malach-Pines, A. (2005). The Burnout measure: Short version (BMS). *International Journal of Stress Management*, 12, 78–88.
- Marks, S. R. (1977). Multiple roles and role strain: Some notes on human energy, time and commitment. *American Sociological Review*, 42, 921–936.
- Parasuraman, S., & Greenhaus, J. H. (2002). Toward reducing some critical gaps in work family research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12, 299–312.
- Peeters, M., Montgomery, A., Bakker, A., & Schaufeli, W. (2005). Balancing work and home: How job demands and home demands are related to burnout. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 12, 43–61.
- Poortman, A. R., & Van der Lippe, T. (2007). *The gendered division of household labor: A matter of taste?* Paper presented at the ESCR and TransEurope conference globalization, social inequality and the life course. Groningen.
- Rhodes, S. R., & Steers, R. M. (1990). *Managing employee absenteeism*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Rothbard, N. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46, 655–684.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Van Dierendonck, D. (1993). The construct validity of two burnout measures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14, 631–647.
- Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P., Maslach, C., & Jackson, S. E. (1996). The Maslach Burnout Inventory—General survey. In C. Maslach, S. E. Jackson, & M. P. Leiter (Eds.), *Maslach Burnout Inventory manual*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press. pp. 22–26.
- SCP (2006). *Emancipatiemonitor 2006*. Veranderingen in de leefsituatie en levensloop. SCP/CBS (Eds). Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau/Textcetera.
- Van Daalen, G., Willemsen, T. M., & Sanders, K. (2006). Reducing work–family conflict through different sources of social support. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69, 462–476.
- Van der Lippe, T., & Glebbeek, A. (2004). Time competition survey. *Machine readable data set*. Utrecht/Groningen: ICS.
- Van Steenbergen, E. F., Ellemers, N., & Mooijaart, A. (2007). How work and family can facilitate each other: Distinct types of work–family facilitation and outcomes for women and men. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12, 279–300.
- Voydanoff, P. (1988). Work role characteristics, family structure demands, and work/family conflict. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 749–761.
- Voydanoff, P. (2002). Linkages between the work family interface and work. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23, 138–1227.
- Wayne, J. H., Randel, A. E., & Stevens, J. (2006). The role of identity and work–family support in work–family enrichment and its work-related consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69, 445–461.
- Winslow, S. (2005). Work family conflict, gender, and parenthood, 1977–1997. *Journal of Family Issues*, 26, 727–755.